

be found at the end of the Book of Common Prayer."

Are the Gospels Trustworthy?

The tone of much of the current thought of the present day is either openly hostile or offensively patronizing to the Christian religion. It is thought by many that science and criticism have undermined the foundations of the Christian creed. For this reason Church journals and Christian teachers should show from time to time the strength of the Christian cause. Just now we deal with one point only. Are the Gospels trustworthy? Will they bear investigation? Would a judge on the bench accept them in a court of law as evidence of the facts they relate? It may not be generally known that this question was examined carefully by the late Professor Greenleaf. There are no greater names in the whole range of law literature than the two great American text writers, Judge Story and Professor Greenleaf, Greenleaf's treatise on "The Law of Evidence" is probably the greatest book on the subject ever written and is a recognized authority in English as well as American courts. It is a matter of profound interest to all Christians that so great an expert on the law of evidence has sifted and examined the narratives of the four evangelists in a book published under the title of "The Testimony of the Evangelists," and rises from the investigation, as he says, with "An undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability and truth." The basis of his investigation is the rule as laid down in "Starkie on Evidence," in these words: "The credit due to the testimony of witnesses depends upon, firstly, their honesty; secondly, their ability; thirdly, their number and the consistency of their testimony; fourthly, the conformity of their testimony with experience; and, fifthly, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances." On these five grounds the investigation proceeds, and on every one of them a verdict favourable to the Gospels is arrived at. Let those who cast aside the Gospel story as incredible and untrustworthy remember that the greatest expert who ever wrote on the law of evidence deemed them worthy of his acceptance and belief.

Ill-Judged Marriages.

One of the saddest things in life is an ill-judged marriage. There are many contributory causes. A passing fancy for a pretty face or shapely form; the sordid wish to share the portion of a wealthy man's daughter; admiration of the literary taste of some bright and promising young woman; a fondness for music and enjoyment of the gifts—whether vocal or instrumental of a clever girl. These are some of them. One of the most fatal of them all is that which arises from a short acquaintance, an impetuous fancy, false conclusions drawn from quick impressions, and the erroneous conclusion that a few days or weeks are sufficient to reveal the true character of a person and enable one to form a sound judgment as to it. What is sometimes supposed to be the grand passion in time proves to have been misguided impulse. There is no event in life that calls for more careful consideration or sounder judgment than marriage. Alas! that it oftentimes should receive so little of either the one or the other.

THANKSGIVING DAY, 1907.

Every age like every individual is apt to have the defects of its virtues. The age in which we live, the best that the world so far has seen, is certainly not exempt from this tendency, or law. It has in a very full measure the defects of its virtues. On October 31st we were called upon by the representative of His Most Gracious Majesty, whom we all delight to honour, to render thanks to Almighty God for the bless-

sings of another year. On this occasion, when in the majority of cases opportunity was taken for national self-congratulation, it was to our gain to consider in what sense and degree we, in common more or less with all our sister nations, are suffering from the abuse of conditions, good and excellent in themselves. So far as Canada is concerned the evils most obtrusively evident are first the decay of authority. This is pre-eminently the defect of a virtue, the abuse of freedom. The great danger to-day in this connection is, that in our love of freedom and our determination to enjoy it to the very fullest extent, we should forget its corresponding duties. The age is in danger of temporarily forgetting the fact that rights without duties are as unthinkable as a balance with one weight. The two are essential to each other. Every right is purchased by the due performance of a duty, and every duty well and faithfully performed earns its own corresponding right. False ideas of independence are consequently everywhere rife. To be independent is to take without giving, to have privileges without responsibilities. It is an entirely one-sided arrangement. Thus the widespread self-assertion of the age. There is little disposition on the part of the average man to "render to all men their dues." He is too self-centred. And, therefore, authority, abused in bygone ages, has woefully declined. Its decay is everywhere manifest in Church and state and family it is a swiftly diminishing force. Obedience, for its own sake, has almost ceased to be a virtue. By this we mean the disposition to sacrifice one's will to another's. This lack in the rising generation is especially to be deplored. For discipline is the basis of all character, and there can be no discipline without obedience. Akin to this evil is the lack of reverence, or at least the lack of reverence for what is really worthy of our reverence. There is plenty of reverence for what is called success, and for the qualities that attract attention and enable a man to gain his avowed ends. But for mere goodness, that makes no noise in the world and brings its possessor no solid return there is, we fear, but scant respect. Again there is the lack of public spirit, which is another effect of a condition of affairs originally good and desirable. Men have largely lost their public spirit, because the great battles for fundamental rights having been fought and won, they imagined that the country could be left to the guidance of professional politicians, and that, so to speak, things could run themselves. The bitterness of party spirit has certainly visibly declined, but with it is undeniably evident a corresponding decline in the public spiritedness that was ready to make personal sacrifices for some object that brought no direct or indirect advantage beyond the triumph of some abstract political principle. We have rid ourselves, to a considerable extent, of the intolerance and acerbity that disfigured our political life a generation ago, but men are certainly not as disinterestedly in earnest in pursuing their political ends as they used to be. A last very marked defect of one of the virtues of the age is false liberality. This is an eminently tolerant age and therefore it is a pre-eminently falsely liberal age. There is a danger of liberality becoming cheap and nasty. But we have already more than once discussed this matter, and will not dwell upon it now. Suffice it to say that it is one of the most widespread and insidious of present day evils, and all the more dangerous because the perversion of something essentially admirable. Nevertheless, thank God, the balance is on the right side. Slowly and irregularly, it may be, but none the less surely and irresistibly the world moves in the right direction. The evils of the age will correct themselves. The truths, of which they are the exaggeration and perversion will reassert themselves. With all its faults it is a big-hearted, generous age. Its failings are of the head rather than the heart. They are, as we have pointed out, defects of virtues rather than positive failings, the overdoing of what in itself is noble and admirable.

And so matters are bound in the end to regain their true proportions and balance. None the less, however, do these evils require vigorous and persistent combatting.

A NOTABLE CONVENTION.

According to the Philadelphia "Church Standard" the Convention of 1907 will go down in history as one of the most remarkable ever held, not only for the work it has accomplished, but for the spirit it has manifested. "Hitherto the American Church has as a rule been characterized by a spirit of extreme conservatism. By the way who was it that recently said that the Americans had become the most conservative of civilized people." In the Convention just closed, however, a new spirit seems to have awakened in the Church. Canons have been passed by overwhelming majorities, which no doubt will be regarded by many Canadian Churchmen as almost meriting the term revolutionary. The most startling is that which permits the Bishop of the diocese to license ministers of other denominations, and laymen, to preach in our churches at the request, we presume, of the incumbent. The results of this radically new departure will be watched with deep interest. It might possibly be adopted as a partial solution of the reunion question among ourselves. Whether or not it will be widely or even appreciably taken advantage of by those interested, and how it will be received by the Church people as a whole, of course, remains to be seen. The Canadian Church is perhaps fortunate in having an object lesson, in the practical working of the scheme, supplied free of cost. Another very important canon, which again marks an entirely new departure from the settled policy and practice of over a century, is that which authorizes the appointment of Suffragan Bishops, without the right of succession. Until now every assistant or Coadjutor Bishop possessed this right by virtue of his appointment. This canon was passed to meet the demand for Negro Bishops, on the principle that the less is contained in the greater, and deserves to be commended as a most ingenious and statesmanlike solution of a very pressing and knotty problem. The Southern dioceses are now free to elect colored Bishops without any fear of the possible complications that might result under the old system. A proposal to constitute a distinct African Church met with hardly any support and was promptly voted down. A radical change in the matter of the Presiding Bishop was made. Hitherto the office has gone to the Senior Bishop, now the Presiding Bishop will be elected by the House of Bishops, subject to the confirmation of the House of Deputies. This, in our opinion, is a wise move, as the duties of the Presiding Bishop are yearly becoming so onerous as to severely tax the time and strength of a man in the full prime of life. A proposal to revise the thirty-nine articles was defeated. The House of Bishops decided in favour of recognizing the validity of Swedish orders. Bishop Brent made a striking, and one might almost say a sensational, speech arraigning the American administration of the Philippines, which subsequently bore fruit in a memorial from the Convention. The proposal to establish the provincial system, i. e., with groups of dioceses presided over by primates was lost by non-concurrence of the laity. A very encouraging report was presented by the General Clergy Relief Fund. This society grants unconditional relief to all disabled clergy, of whatever age or diocese, supplementing whatever they may receive from local funds. During the past three years it has raised over \$325,000, and has added \$138,000 to its permanent funds. A committee was appointed to take steps to raise a fund of \$5,000,000. A member of this committee has promised \$5,000 per annum for three years to secure the services of an agent to push the matter. What is there to prevent the Canadian Church from establishing a